## IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): <u>A Method method</u> for recognizing speech, comprising:

receiving an input speech signal,

preprocessing said input speech signal in order to thereby generate a preprocessed speech signal,

performing speech recognition with respect to said preprocessed speech signal in order to generate a recognition result, and

outputting said recognition result,

wherein in [[a]] <u>said</u> preprocessing section (S2), a step of performing a variance normalization (VN) is applicable to a given or the received speech signal (S), and/or to a derivative (S') thereof, said preprocessing section comprising the steps of includes:

performing a statistical analysis (S11) of said speech signal (S) and/or of a derivative (S') thereof, thereby generating and/or and providing statistical evaluation data (ED),

generating and/or providing a normalization degree data (ND) from said statistical evaluation data (ED), and

performing [[a]] <u>said</u> variance normalization (VN) on said speech signal (S), a derivative (S') and/or on a component thereof in accordance with said normalization degree data (ND) – in particular with a normalization strength corresponding to said normalization degree data (ND)—, with normalization <u>strength corresponding to said normalization</u> degree data with normalization degree data having a value or values in a neighbourhood of being 0

with respect to a given threshold value indicating that no variance normalization (VN) has to be performed.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The Method method according to Claim 1, wherein said statistical analysis (S11) is performed in an at least piecewise or partial frequency-dependent manner.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The Method method according to Claim 1, wherein said evaluation data (ED) and/or said normalization data (ND) are generated so as to reflect at least a piecewise frequency dependency.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The Method method according to Claim 1, wherein said statistical analysis (S11) includes a step of determining signal-to-noise ratio data (SNR) or the like, in particular in a frequency-dependent manner.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The Method method according to Claim 1, wherein a set of discrete normalization degree values (Dj) is used as said normalization degree data (ND), in particular each of which discrete normalization degree value being assigned to a certain frequency interval (fj,  $\Delta$ fj), and said intervals (fj,  $\Delta$ fj) having essentially no overlap.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The Method method according to Claim 5, wherein each of said discrete normalization degree values (Dj) has a value within the interval of 0 and 1.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The Method method according to Claim 1, wherein in each case, a normalization degree value (Dj) in the neighbourhood of being 0 indicates to skip any variance normalization (VN) for the respective assigned frequency interval (fj,  $\Delta$ fj).

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The Method method according to Claim 1, wherein in each case, a normalization degree value (Dj) in the neighbourhood of being 1 indicates with respect to a given threshold value indicates to perform a maximum variance normalization (VN) for the respective assigned frequency interval (fj, Δfj).

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The Method method according to Claim 1, wherein a transfer function between said statistical evaluation data (ED) and said normalization degree data (ND) is used for generating said normalization degree data (ND) from said statistical evaluation data (ED).

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The Method method according to Claim 9, wherein a piecewise continuous, continuous or continuous differentiable function of the like is used as said transfer function, so as to particularly achieve a smooth and/or differentiable transfer between said statistical evaluation data (ED) and said normalization degree data (ND).

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The Method method according to Claim 9, wherein a theta-function, or a sigmoidal function, or the like is employed as said transfer function.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The Method method according to Claim 1, wherein said variance normalization (S14) is carried out by multiplying said speech signal (S), a derivative (S') and/or a component thereof with a reduction factor (R) being a function of said statistical evaluation data (ED), in particular of the signal noise, and the normalization degree data (ND), in particular of the normalization degree values (Dj) and/or in particular in a frequency-dependent manner.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The Method method according to Claim 1,
wherein a reduction factor (R) is used having the – in particular frequency-dependent
– form

$$R = 1/(1 + (\sigma - 1) \cdot D)$$

with  $\sigma$  denoting the temporal standard deviation of the speech signal (S), its derivative (S'), a component and/or a feature thereof and D denotes the normalization degree value in question.